

the guardian weekly

January 2012

Level » Advanced

Style » Individual or group activities



Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: Advanced and Lower Intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from guardian.co.uk/weekly/. You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould

Kenya's poor find new work creating high fashion

Before reading

- 1 **The article is about the international clothes industry. Work with a partner and discuss the questions below.**
 - a In which countries are many of the world's clothes produced?
 - b What are the pay and conditions like in many clothes factories?
 - c Have you heard of any schemes to improve the life of workers in the clothes industry?
- 2 **Vocabulary from the article. Complete the sentences with the adjectives below.**
disadvantaged, ethical, marginalised, thriving, unique
 - a If a person is , they are on the edge of society and without much power.
 - b If a business is , it is doing extremely well.
 - c If a teenager is , they don't have the education or money to succeed in life.
 - d If a product is , it is the only one of its kind.
 - e If a project is , it is considered to be morally good or correct.



New style ... Vivienne Westwood supporter of Africa charity
 Juergen Teller

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Article

Kenya's poor find new work creating high fashion

- 1 In a whitewashed building in Nairobi's industrial area, scores of women are sewing handbags for some of fashion's best-known labels. But as their machines clack rhythmically they are also crafting a new future for themselves.
- 2 On a table by the open door there is a pile of cloth totes by British designer Vivienne Westwood, and the vivid colours of Carmina Campus bags by Italian Ilaria Venturini Fendi spill across a bench.
- 3 Nairobi's Hub workshop is the heartbeat of Ethical Fashion Africa, a not-for-profit group created by the International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint UN and World Trade Organisation body, to empower marginalised people by linking them up with fashion houses and distributors.
- 4 The women are from some of Nairobi's most deprived areas - Kibera, Korogocho, Dagoretti and others. The production room hums as ceiling fans slice the muggy air of Kenya's rainy season. Thousands more work from home on the bags and accessories that will end up in designer stores across the world.
- 5 Joyce Kamau, a single mother with two children, works as a supervisor. She started at Ethical Fashion Africa two years ago and says she can now provide for her family's basic needs. "We didn't know we could get to this," she says, gesturing to some startlingly bright machine embroidery. She said others in the group once found the work difficult but, she said: "I encourage them and I inspire them."
- 6 The slogan adopted by Ethical Fashion Africa is "not charity, just work". The factory is hidden away at the back of the GoDown, a thriving community of artists and musicians on the edge of Nairobi. As well as Westwood and Fendi, Stella McCartney sources work here, as do European

distributors such as the Italian retailer Coop. There are plans to move into the US next year through a deal with Wal-Mart to distribute products online.

- 7 About 5,000 people in Kenya are involved with the initiative and 90% of them are women, mostly from disadvantaged or isolated communities in Nairobi and beyond.
- 8 As for the fashion houses, the deal suits them too. "They get unique products ... that are worth the money. And, on top of that, they get a beautiful story of responsibility," said Simone Cipriani, head of ITC's poor communities and trade programme.

Clar Ni Chonghaile Nairobi

Glossary

scores of (plural noun) large numbers of something (a score is a group of 20)

tote (bag) (noun) a large two-handled open bag

empower (verb) to give somebody more control over their life or situation

muggy (adjective) warm and damp in an unpleasant way

initiative (noun) a new plan for achieving a particular purpose

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While reading

- 1 Read the article. Put yes [Y] or no [N] next to the sentences below. Underline where you find the information in the text.

The new initiative in Nairobi ...

- a ☐ involves the production of designer footwear.
 b ☐ has both the UN and World Trade Organisation behind it.
 c ☐ employs workers in workshops or in their own homes.
 d ☐ requires very simple sewing work.
 e ☐ is mostly about giving charity to the poor.
 f ☐ involves only British designers at present.
 g ☐ will target the American market in the future.
 h ☐ is positive for the fashion houses.

- 2 Read the article. Answer the questions then compare answers with a partner.

- a Which famous names in fashion are involved in the initiative?

- b What is the key aim of the ITC in setting up Ethical Fashion Africa?

- c What type of workers does the initiative employ? Where do they come from?

- d How has the initiative helped one particular employee? How has she helped others?

- e What are the particular advantages for the fashion houses?

After reading

- 1 In the description of the building in Nairobi, the journalist uses a range of imagery. What image does she convey with each word?

- a ... they are also crafting a new future for themselves. (paragraph 1)

- b ... the vivid colours of Carmina Campus bags ... spill across the bench. (para 2)

- c Nairobi's Hub workshop is the heartbeat of Ethical Fashion Africa ... (para 3)

- d The production room hums as ceiling fans slice the muggy air ... (para 4)

- 2 As and phrases with as

As can be used in a variety of ways. Look at these examples from the article. Match them to the meanings below.

- a ☐ But as the machines clack rhythmically ... (para 1)
 b ☐ Joyce Kamau ... works as a supervisor. (para 5)
 c ☐ As well as Westwood and Fendi ... (para 6)
 d ☐ ... McCartney sources work here, as do European distributors ... (para 6)
 e ☐ ... European distributors such as the Italian Coop. (para 6)
 f ☐ As for the fashion houses, the deal suits them too. (para 8)

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- 1 for example
- 2 in addition to
- 3 while
- 4 in the job of
- 5 regarding
- 6 in the same way that

Write your own sentences with the different uses of *as* above.

[illegible]

Activity - discussion

Are ethical considerations important to you when you buy clothes or accessories? Imagine you are buying a pair of jeans. Put the factors below in order from the most important [1] to the least important [7]. Compare your ideas with a partner.

- ☐ comfort and fit
- ☐ style and colour
- ☐ quality of material
- ☐ price and overall value for money
- ☐ brand or label
- ☐ made by workers receiving fair pay and conditions
- ☐ produced in an environmentally friendly way

Answers

Before reading

2a marginalised **b** thriving **c** disadvantaged **d** unique **e** ethical

While reading

1aN bY cYdNeNfNgYhY

2a Vivienne Westwood, Illaria Venturini Fendi, Stella McCartney.

b To empower marginalised people in Africa and give them work by linking them up with fashion houses/distributors.

c It mostly employs poorer women from deprived, disadvantaged or isolated communities in Nairobi and beyond.

d Joyce Kamau is able to provide for her family's needs. She is now a supervisor

who trains and inspires others.

e They can source unique products worth the money, plus they have a positive story of responsibility.

After reading

1a The workers are physically making bags but they are also creating a better future for themselves.

b The colourful bags look like paint spilled across the bench.

c The workshop is the living, moving centre of the group.

d The blades of the fans cut through the thick air like knives.

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